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THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

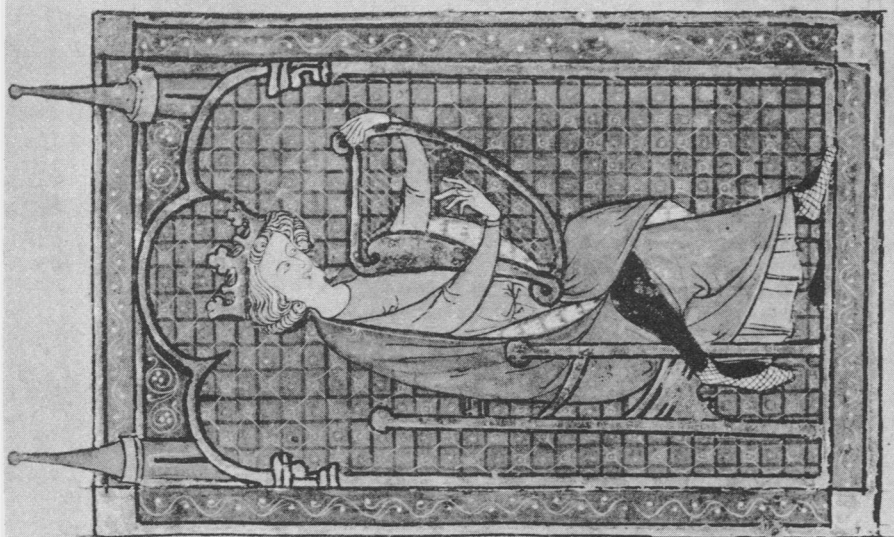
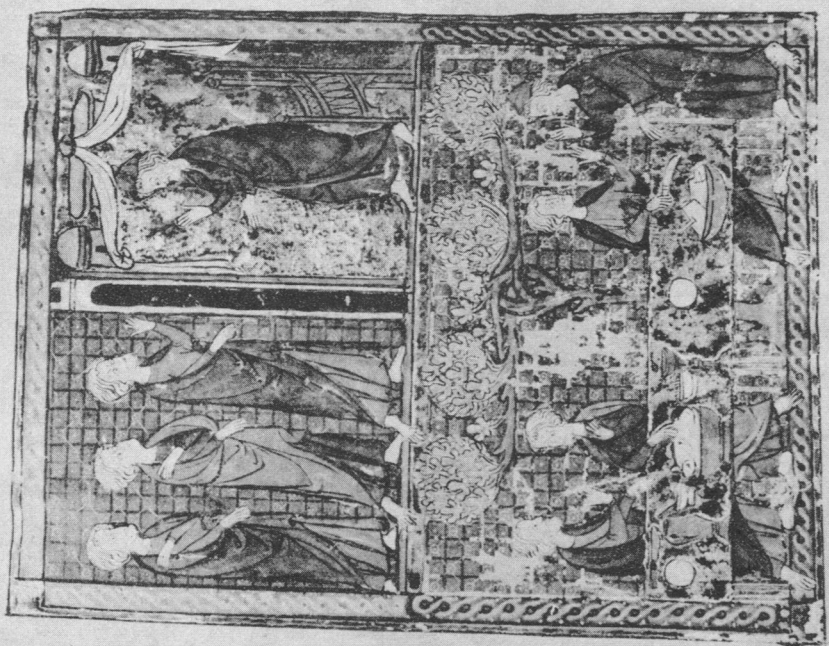
JANUARY, 1905

AN ANCIENT ILLUMINATED HEBREW MS. AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

IN the present paper I wish to bring to the notice of readers of this REVIEW one of the most interesting and most elaborately illuminated Hebrew MSS. in existence. Parts of it have been consulted or studied by various scholars, but its contents form such a veritable treasury of Jewish literature that a comprehensive study of the volume would be sure to throw light on many topics.

The MS. is numbered Add. 11,639, measures about $6\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., and contains 746 vellum leaves. It was written in France towards the end of the thirteenth century. At the back it bears the modest impress, *Chumash et Machzor*, but it in reality contains ever so many other texts, such as *Seder shel Hachamim*, *Megillath Taanith*, *Hattarshish*, *Seder Haddoroth*, a commentary on *Selichoth*, and a number of other pieces which still await comparison with works of a similar nature. For the present, however, I will only give a list of the thirty-nine coloured miniature pictures which the MS. contains. With the exception of the three miniatures belonging to the second series, all are full-page. The MS. is besides richly illuminated with initials and borders of various designs. The subject ought really to be approached from the artistic point of view, and should be

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treated similarly to the *Haggadah of Serajevo* and cognate works. In point of antiquity the present MS. must undoubtedly take rank before the *Haggadah* just mentioned as well as before Lord Crawford's *Haggadah* (now at the Rylands Library, Manchester), and the British Museum illustrated MSS. of the *Haggadah*. The present writer can, however, only deal with the matter from a bibliographical point of view, and give it a treatment which may possibly lead to further work on the subject by others.

The pictures, four series in all, occur in the MS. in the following order. Each picture has a Hebrew description, which is not, however, cited here.

A. FIRST SERIES, FOLL. 114^a-122^a.

a. Fol. 114^a: seven-branched candlestick in gold on a ground of green, blue, and red. The high-priest on the left, pouring in oil.

b. Fol. 115^a: the opened hand, with notes relating to palmistry prognostics, the outlines of the hand being drawn in gold mixed with black.

c. Fol. 116^a: King Solomon, intent upon a scroll of the Law in his hands. The figure is seated on an arm-chair, with the foot resting on a footstool. A red cap on the head. The whole is enclosed by a rounded archway. Gold and various colours.

d. Fol. 117^b: King David, playing on the harp. The figure is seated on a gilded throne, with a crown on the head; enclosed within a canopied archway. Gold and various colours.

e. Fol. 118^a: (1) Upper part of page, Abraham going to welcome the three angels: (2) lower half, the three angels sitting at meat, with Abraham in attendance upon them.

f. Fol. 118^b: (1) Upper part, Sarah in the tent, with Abraham pointing towards the same by way of informing the angel; (2) on the right of lower half, the angel announcing that Sarah would bear a son; (3) on the left of lower half, two of the angels on the way to Sodom for the purpose of destroying it.

g. Fol. 119^a: the two angels throwing down fire and brimstone upon Sodom. The page is divided into two equal parts separated by

two perpendicular and closely parallel lines of gold reaching from the upper to the lower border.

h. Fol. 119^b: (1) on the upper half, the two angels leading Lot and his two daughters away from Sodom, Lot's wife being left behind as a pillar of salt; (2) on the lower half, Lot and his daughters in the cave.

i. Fol. 120^a: (1) on the upper part of the page. a picture described as the two angels interposing between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. In each corner is a winged angel in a flame of fire. (2) In the lower part, the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea. The figure of Moses is drawn with his staff in his right hand and (by an anachronism) the tables of the Law in his left.

k. Fol. 120^b: (1) on the upper part, Moses striking the rock, with another figure (that of Aaron or Joshua ?) near him; (2) on the lower part, the brazen serpent on the top of a pole, with three persons on each side looking up to it.

l. Fol. 121^a: (1) Holofernes in a sitting posture, with Judith standing opposite him; (2) on the lower part, Judith beheading Holofernes.

m. Fol. 121^b: (1) on the upper part, Aaron burning incense on the altar of gold; (2) on the lower part, the sea of Solomon's temple.

n. Fol. 122: the tree of life, with four angels guarding it, each having a kind of long shining arrow in his hand.

B. SECOND SERIES, FOLL. 259^b–260^b.

a. Fol. 259^b: a picture in four compartments. In the upper two, Nebuchadnezzar speaking to Hananiah, Misael, and Azarias; in the two lower compartments, the three children and the Archangel Gabriel over a flame of fire, with Nebuchadnezzar and the nobles opposite.

b. Fol. 260^a: (1) on the upper part, apparently, Daniel before King Darius (Dan. vi). There is another figure behind each of these. (2) On the lower part, Daniel in the lions' den.

c. Fol. 260^b: Ahasuerus holding out the golden sceptre to Esther.

Note.—The blank left for a picture on fol. 261^a has not been filled in.

C. THIRD SERIES, FOLL. 516^b–527^b.

- a. Fol. 516^b*: a figure in circles, illustrating the signs of the Zodiac.
- b. Fol. 517^a*: a circular figure, with sun, moon and stars within it.
- c. Fol. 517^b*: the fabulous bird known as Bar-Yochani, with an egg underneath it.
- d. Fol. 518^a*: King Solomon judging between the two women concerning the ownership of the child.
- e. Fol. 518^b*: the leviathan.
- f. Fol. 519^a*: the shōr habbar.
- g. Fol. 519^b*: Aaron's rod that budded, with five non-budding rods on one side and six on the other.
- h. Fol. 520^a*: Samson killing the lion.
- i. Fol. 520^b*: Adam on the right, Eve on the left, and the tree of knowledge in the middle with the serpent twining round it.
- k. Fol. 521^a*: the ark in which Noah and his family were saved from the flood.
- l. Fol. 521^b*: the intended offering of Isaac, with the angel on the right taking hold of the raised knife.
- m. Fol. 522^a*: the Cherubim over the mercy-seat; the golden table and a censer.
- n. Fol. 522^b*: Aaron pouring oil into the lamps of the golden candlestick.
- o. Fol. 523^a*: Aaron wearing the mitre inscribed with the words, קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה; he also wears the breastplate, and the bells at the bottom of his mantle. There is no inscription below this picture.
- p. Fol. 523^b*: David and Goliath. Below, the figure of Goliath.
- q. Fol. 524^a*: Esther before Ahasuerus.
- Note.*—Foll. 524^b, 525^a are blank.
- r. Fol. 525^b*: Moses with his hands supported by Aaron and Hur.
- s. Fol. 526^a*: Samuel beheading Agag.
- Note.*—Foll. 526^b, 527^a are blank.
- t. Fol. 527^b*: Mordecai on horseback, with Haman holding the bridle.

D. FOURTH SERIES, FOLL. 740^a-743^a.

a. Fol. 740^b: picture of a burning city within a gilded circle, the open mouth of a reptile, or the like, gaping widely at the bottom of the picture. The inscription refers to Isaiah lxvi. 23.

b. Fol. 741^a: within a gilded circle, Lot and his two daughters, and Lot's wife in the act of being turned into a pillar of salt. This picture is quite different from the one given under A, *h*.

c. Fol. 741^b: within a gilded circle, Moses holding the tables of the Law, with six princes of Israel by his side. The illustration, therefore, refers to the incident of the budding of Aaron's rod, and the unchanged condition of the other rods. It is, however, difficult to see why only six princes should be present. See the next number.

d. Fol. 742^a: within a gilded circle, Aaron's rod that budded, and the other rods, five on one side and six on the other. Compare the preceding number and C, *g*.

e. Fol. 742^b: a picture in two divisions. In the upper smaller division, a fanciful picture of the brazen serpent; in the lower division, five men looking up to the brazen serpent. The margins have been too closely cut. There is in this instance no inscription.

f. Fol. 743^a: within a gilded circle, Moses about to strike the rock, with two other persons standing behind him. There is no inscription. Compare A, *k*.

The miniatures A, *d*, *e* (foll. 117^b, 118^v) are here reproduced (though without the colouring) as a specimen of the art.

G. MARGOLIOUTH.